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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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A war of the magnitude of the present European struggle is bound to affect every phase of life. So even the teacher of the Classics, reputed as he is to be remote from the concerns of every-day life, is professionally interested in the war. For one thing he is anxious about the damage which may be done to objects of interest to classical students, notably libraries with their manuscripts and museums with their classical relics. Probably the most important standing monument of antiquity in the present war zone is the fine triple arch at Rheims. I have seen no report concerning any injury to it. There are museums with valuable antiquities at Liège, Namur, Rheims and Epinal. The most important library within the war zone thus far is at Brussels. Next in importance is that at Rheims; there are others in towns whose names have recently become familiar, such as Mons, Laon, Douai, Ghent, Bruges and Liège, though Liège is not of such importance as it was in the days when Petrarch discovered there two new orations of Cicero, including the Oration for Archias. Five of the above libraries contain manuscripts in which I myself have a special interest. The very valuable library destroyed at Louvain did not contain manuscripts of particular importance to classical students. So far the danger has been from bombardment and from fires kindled in reprisal. It is a blessing that Brussels offered no resistance. Other possible dangers are pillaging and theft. It remains to be seen whether the hatred will become so intense that wanton destruction and confiscation will take place. Napoleon carried from Italy to Paris great quantities of manuscripts and art objects, which, however, were for the most part returned. An interesting reminder of this event is the fact that the stamp of what is now the National Library of Paris is to be found in many manuscripts in various Italian libraries.

To a considerable extent excavation of classical sites has stopped. It is likely that American projects for excavation in Asia Minor will be postponed. In general, research in the classical field, as in others, will be somewhat affected. For one thing, many of the younger European scholars are at the front, and will be temporarily, if not permanently, prevented from prosecuting their researches. The Baltimore Sun of November 22 (for which I am indebted to Professor David M. Robinson of Johns Hopkins) quotes President Butler of Columbia as saying that sixty-six of the professors of the University of Berlin have joined the army. The

attendance there is less than one-half of its normal size; at the University of Paris it is one-fourth, and at Oxford and Cambridge one-third. As President Butler says, the most deplorable effect of the war is the slaughtering of the "best men in Europe, the men of power and education, the men who have done things". Many libraries and museums are closed; others in the war zones are inaccessible even to neutrals, while scholars of belligerent nations can not pursue their studies in hostile countries. A German archaeologist, for example, can not study at first-hand the treasures in the museums of France, Russia and England. Even after the close of the war foreign scholars will be slow to take up again their travels in the lands of their former enemies. Here, as in industrial fields, America has an opportunity and a duty as well. If the war is long-continued, certain fields of work must be taken care of by American scholars if they are not to lie neglected. At present even Americans are greatly hampered by the conditions of travel. Many professors and students have abandoned contemplated trips to Europe. The attendance at the American Schools of Classical Studies at Rome and Athens has been greatly affected and the work of these schools has been interfered with. The appointee to the annual professorship at the school in Athens was asked to postpone his coming to Athens.

A long war will bring about a financial depression in Europe that will affect the Classics as other cultural subjects. The attention of the multitude will be devoted to a struggle for the bread of life and the butter of culture will be a luxury for the few. Research will be blocked by the limitation of the possibility of publishing and by the abandonment of large projects of publication, excavation, etc. Up to the present every effort is being made to keep up publication and distribution. Everything considered, all the nations involved are doing surprisingly well. One German book firm at least has established a branch at Amsterdam in order to maintain its trade with America. Periodicals and books are appearing, though at times belated.

But the war is of interest to the classical teacher in still another way. It is bound to increase the interest of our students in Caesar and Livy, especially the former. And this interest can be encouraged by apt illustrations of the lessons from the war news. Other authors too can be made more interesting, as experience has shown. Now that one thinks of it, it would seem not improbable that the outcry against Caesar in the second year of the

High School course is, in some measure, due to the fact that we in this country had grown away from war—it had become too remote and was too little concerned with daily life. In fact, some of us had begun to think that war between civilized nations was a thing of the past. Classical students have not been slow to draw comparisons between Caesar's campaigns and the present war (see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 8.42-43, 69-70).

Our constant problem as teachers is to span the gap of two thousand years between us and the Romans. In the *Aeneid* we can do this chiefly by the universality of appeal of the Vergilian love-story. In Cicero our main reliance just now is the similarity between Roman and American politics. For Caesar we have the present war. The Meuse is the Mosa, and the Vosges mountains are Mons Vosegus (B. G. 4.10). Soissons is named after the Suessiones and is their town of Noviodunum (B. G. 2.12), while Rheims is named after the Remi (B. G. 3.3, etc.) and is the ancient Durocortorum. The romantic poet complains of the man who sees nothing in the yellow primrose but a primrose. The man with a historical imagination (a form of romanticism) catches glimpses, in these names of town, river and mountain, of the history of two thousand years. Namur, at the juncture of the Sambre (Sabis) and the Meuse, is probably the site of the Oppidum Aduatucorum (B. G. 2.29). The modern Belgians were confident that their fortifications at Liège, Namur and Antwerp were invincible, but, to the amazement of all, the long-range guns of the Germans quickly showed the weakness of those mighty fortresses. The ancient Aduatuci were certain that their stronghold could not be taken and laughed at the Romans when they saw them setting up their engines of war (B. G. 2.30). But, when they saw a huge tower coming toward them, their laughter turned to dismay, and it was not long before the town was in Caesar's hands. In the last few months the Germans have taught us the same lesson that Caesar taught the world two thousand years ago—that fortresses must yield before efficient military methods. The next great fortress on the Sambre is Maubeuge; only a few miles from its site, on the banks of the river, Caesar defeated the Nervii (B. G. 2.16 ff.). The battles on the Aisne that we read of in the newspapers remind us of Caesar's battle on that river, the ancient Axona (B. G. 2.5 ff.), near Berry-au-Bac, so often mentioned in the newspapers. It was in Alsace that Caesar fought Ariovistus.

Is it rash to say that Caesar's phrase *horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae*, so often quoted of late, has been a stimulus to Latin study? The enterprising teacher has no doubt made the most of it. It is a pleasure for us school-teachers, hammering and grinding away at that raw product which we euphemistically and optimistically call a student, to fancy that a few boys and girls at least will remember all their lives the thrill of pleasure and surprise which they felt when they saw before their eyes in the newspaper the very Latin words which they had just stumbled over in the Caesar class. B. L. U.

VERGIL AND THE COUNTRY PASTOR¹

Ignarosque viae mecum miseratus agrestis.

'They do not know the way, our country folk; have thou, with me, compassion on them'. Vergil invoked a blessing from the ruler of his people, but he himself had in his own heart an inspiration which the emperor could not have given him. His purpose was to teach tillage of the ground with a view to luxuriant crops, times of work and signs of weather, culture of trees and of the vine, care of animals, and tending of bees. But he taught these practical things from the point of view of a poet, and hence came the value of his compassion; for if farmers are to be satisfied, and to win a real human success out of their life, they must know it as a poet knows it. There is nothing more real than the life which a poet can see. If a country pastor learns how Vergil looked at the Italian farmer's practical life, he may find an inspiration which will help the words he speaks to American country people.

For the *Georgics* of Vergil are like a great symphony in four movements, the themes being certain great thoughts, of which the first is Labour. 'In the new springtime, when the snow on the white hills runs off in moisture, and at the west wind's breath the clods crumble and loosen, then thrust in the plough, and let the ox pant and sigh in the furrow, and the ploughshare wear and shine'. The directions for work which follow have a rhythm which makes sweet company for a learner, like the gleam of the ploughshare in the furrow, and which leaves a bright memory, like the thought of the white hills. The farmer has near him a brook flowing from those once snow-clad hills, and he saves the water. Then later in the season, 'when the burned land is hot, and the grain blades are dying, see, from the brow of the slope where the brook has its way, he draws out the water', to refresh his lands.

*Illa cadens raucum per levia murmur
saxa ciet, scatebrisque arentia temperat arva.*

'And as it falls over the smooth stones it makes a hoarse, murmuring sound, and bubbles on, and cools the withering fields'. One can see the Vergilian farmer pause one moment, to see that all goes well with the irrigating stream; and as he pauses, his eyes and ears take in the beauty of the life-giving water.

And yet there is constant danger of failure in the farmer's life. The old days, of which Greeks and Italians dreamed, when earth bore freely food enough for men who could be content with acorns and the lazy forest wealth, the golden age, passed away when Jupiter became king of the earth. 'He put the poison in the grim snakes, and ordered that the wolves should prowl for their prey, and the sea should toss'. Honey and fire and wine he hid away from easy finding, with a purpose that men should learn to work with watchful art and intellect. And so failure is near, a constant tendency to degeneration, were it not for Labour, the

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